

Reinstatement to F1 Status

Overview

It is a student's responsibility to know and comply with all regulations pertaining to their visa classification while in the United States.

Reinstatement is a process that allows students to regain their lawful F-1 student status so they can continue their studies in the United States without interruption. When a SEVIS record is terminated because a student no longer meets F-1 requirements, the student can return to F1 status by

- 1) Traveling outside the U.S. and reentering with a new I-20 with a new SEVIS number. Another SEVIS fee will need to be paid.

OR

- 2) Applying to USCIS

The information below will walk you through the reinstatement process step-by-step. Our goal is to make this experience as clear and supportive as possible so that you feel confident moving forward.

The Basics of Reinstatement to F1 Status

1. Contact your ISS Advisor & schedule an appointment
2. Decide if you want to reinstate inside the United States or by travel
3. You are not eligible to work while your reinstatement is pending
4. Register for full-time credit hours for current and next semesters
5. Gather documents & provide to SLCC ISS Department
6. Get your I-20 from your ISS Advisor
7. Student initiates reinstatement by
 - a. Applying to USCIS
 - or**
 - b. Exiting the U.S. and reentering with new I-20
8. Continue to register for full-time courses each semester
9. Continue to work with your ISS Advisor as needed

Important Notes

- You have 5 months to file for reinstatement
- You should continue to enroll full-time each semester
- Your I-20 must remain at SLCC until reinstatement is approved.
- While you are out of status, you cannot receive a travel signature, apply for change of status, or use F-1 employment benefits (on-campus, or CPT)

- While your reinstatement application is under review by USCIS, you may lawfully remain inside the United States, provided you do not engage in unauthorized employment and maintain full-time enrollment.
- You may consult with an immigration attorney on the Reinstatement process, but it is not required by USCIS.

Option 1: Applying to USCIS

While reinstatement is only approved under certain conditions and at the discretion of USCIS, many students do qualify, and SLCC is here to support you through the process. You may be eligible to apply for reinstatement if:

1. You are filing **within five months** of the date your I-20 was terminated.
2. You do not have a history of repeated or willful violations of F-1 regulations.
3. You are currently, or plan to continue a full course of study at SLCC.
4. You have not engaged in unauthorized employment.
5. You are not removable for any other reason, such as criminal activity.
6. You can substantiate that
 - the status violation resulted from circumstances beyond your control **or**
 - the status violation is related to a reduced course load that would have been within International Student Services power to authorize **and**
 - you would experience extreme hardship if your reinstatement request were not approved

Steps to Complete

1. Provide the SLCC International Student Services (ISS) Department with the following documents:
 - Proof of Financial Support: Updated bank statements showing
 - account holder's name
 - transaction history for the past 3 months
 - minimum balance of \$26,954
 - USD conversion
 - Updated Financial Sponsor Statement
 - Current Passport
 - F1 Visa
 - I-94
 - Enrollment Verification Letter from the Registrar's Office (<https://www.slcc.edu/registrar/enrollment-verification.aspx>)
 - Your letter of explanation addressed to USCIS
2. Write a letter of explanation to USCIS that includes:
 - Why you are out of status
 - The reason for the status violation
 - The effect on you if reinstatement is not granted
 - A statement that you are currently registered full-time. Or, if you are not registered full-time explain why
 - A specific request that USCIS reinstate you to F-1 student status

3. Complete [Form I-539](#)

- Indicate that application is for reinstatement to student
- Submit documents:
 - Proof of Financial Support
 - Copy of Current Passport
 - Copy of F-1 Visa
 - I-94 (most recent)
 - Form I-20 with Reinstatement Recommendation, issued by SLCC ISS
 - I-901 Fee Receipt (if out of status for more than 5 months)
 - Your letter of explanation to USCIS
 - Enrollment Verification Letter
- Pay filing fee: Indicate that application is for reinstatement to student
- Submit documents: \$470 for paper filing or \$420 if filed online

4. SEVIS Fee Requirement:

- If you have been out of status for **less than 5 months**, you **do not** need to pay a new SEVIS fee.
- If you have been out of status for **more than 5 months**, you **do need** to pay a new SEVIS I-901 fee and include proof of payment with your application.
- Pay the SEVIS fee here: FMJFee.com

After Applying to USCIS

1. **Remain inside the United States.** Traveling outside the United States will cancel your Reinstatement application, and you will remain out of status.
2. **Check your USCIS portal account regularly** for:
 - a. **Form I-797C.** This is a letter from USCIS confirming that they have received your application, and it is under review.
 - b. **Request for Evidence (RFE) Notification:** USCIS may send you a letter requesting additional information. If you receive an RFE: Read it carefully to understand what information USCIS is requesting and the deadline to submit the information. Also, contact our office ASAP and give us a copy of the RFE. This will help us to best advise you on the RFE process.
 - c. **Form I-797A:** This is a letter from USCIS stating that your application was approved or denied. Save a copy of this letter in a safe place.
3. **Full-time Enrollment:** Continue to register for full-time courses each semester. Full-time is 12 credit hours with a minimum of 9 credit hours of in-person instruction. Failure to maintain full-time course registration may affect your Reinstatement application.
4. **Final Semester:** If you are in your final semester of your program, you may decide if you want to enroll for fewer than 12 credit hours, as you would be eligible for a final

semester Reduced Course Load. This should be included in your explanation letter to USCIS.

Option 2: Exiting the US and Reentering with new Initial I-20

After reentry to the U.S. you will be considered in F-1 status, however this is different from a formal reinstatement.

Steps to Complete

1. Provide the SLCC International Student Services (ISS) Department with the following documents:
 - Proof of Financial Support: Updated bank statements showing
 - account holder's name
 - transaction history for the past 3 months
 - minimum balance of \$26,954
 - USD conversion
 - Updated Financial Sponsor Statement
 - Current Passport
 - Valid F1 Visa
 - I-94
 - Enrollment Verification Letter from the Registrar's Office (<https://www.slcc.edu/registrar/enrollment-verification.aspx>)
2. Request an Initial I-20 from SLCC International Student Services
3. Pay the I-901 SEVIS fee & save your receipt: [FMJFee.com](https://www.fmjfee.com)
4. Exit the US and reenter at the port of entry. Be prepared to show your
 - Passport
 - F1 visa
 - Initial I-20
 - I-901 payment receipt
 - Financial documents

After Reentry to the U.S.

You must check in with our office and bring an updated copy of your new I-94 card.

Continue to register for full-time courses each semester. Full-time is 12 credit hours with a minimum of 9 credit hours of in-person instruction.